

Ms. Michalak,

I would like to submit the following testimony concerning SB 288. Thank you for your time.

I would like to address SB 288 and the dangerous precedent this bill poses to the rights granted the citizens of Michigan by our state constitution.

The people of the state are very opposed to the legislation that was passed last year to list the wolf as a game species. This is evidenced by the fact that over 2000 volunteers were able to collect over 255,000 signatures to place a referendum vote on the 2014 ballot concerning PA 520 of 2012. Of special note is the fact that these signatures were gathered, not during the summer months. Rather, they were gathered in the dead of winter. At times, the outside temperature was not even in the teens. Yet, people, a lot of people, still stopped to sign a petition and to voice their opposition to naming the wolf a state game species. I would add that these people signed this in the internet age, where folks would much rather click a button to sign a petition than to stop and fill out a number of fields, pen-to-paper.

S.B. 288 is nothing more than Senator Casperson's attempt to circumvent the right of legislative recourse the people were granted by our state constitution. As residents of this state, we Michiganders are afforded the RIGHT to referendum in the case of laws that do not contain appropriations and that we feel should not be on the books. Such an undertaking is no small task. The number of signatures required should more than demonstrate the fact that the people of the state are opposed to the legislation facing a potential referendum. Even after the number of required signatures are collected and certified by the state, the registered voters of the state still have to vote on the legislation in a general election, thus affirming their opposition.

The pursuit of a referendum on a piece of legislation is such a monumental undertaking that it cannot be exercised without a great deal of conviction by a great number of registered voters in the state. As such, if the state congress is going to deem all referendum attempts in a particular area of state law (in this case, the addition/removal of state game species) prohibited, then the state congress may as well pick and choose whatever other rights it wants to deny its citizens, as it has already set a precedent to proceed down a dangerously slippery slope.

A number of the registered voters I spoke with concerning the listing of the gray wolf as a game species in Michigan voiced severe disapproval at the way they felt the state congress had been "sneaking" a variety of legislation through and the way they felt betrayed by the appropriations that were attached to various bills, thus making them referendum-proof, if passed. The 1 million dollar appropriation attached to this bill does not fool us. We realize that Senator Casperson is merely seeking to snub the voters who gathered enough signatures in opposition to PA 520 by denying them their right according to the state constitution.

A great number of us stand united in opposition to this legislation.

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